

THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

By BOOTH TARKINGTON,
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Synopsis of Previous Chapters.

CHAPTER I—Eugene Bantry, a Canadian (Ind.) young man, who has been east to college, returned home and astounded the natives by the gorgeousness of his raiment. His stepbrother, Joe, aged male gossip who daily assemble at the National House for argument as the good for nothing associate of doubtful characters. II—Eugene's appearance has a pronounced effect upon Mamie Pike, whose father, Judge Pike, is the wealthiest and most prominent citizen of Canaan. Joe worships Mamie from afar. Eugene interferes in a snow fight between Joe and his holdenish and very poor girl friend, Ariel Tabor, who is worsted. Ariel holds the interference and slaps Eugene, who sends her home. III—Ariel, unbecomingly attired, attends Mamie Pike's ball. IV—Joe, concealed behind some plants on the Pike veranda, watches hungrily for a glimpse of Mamie. Ariel is ignored by most of the guests. Ariel discovers Joe, but shortly afterwards, learning that her uncle, Jonas Tabor, has died suddenly, leaves. V—The Daily Tocsin of the next day tells of Joe's discovery on the Pike veranda and of his pursuit and escape therefrom. It also refers to wounds in the head of himself and of Norbert Flitcroft, who detected him. Joe retreats to the "Beach," a low resort kept by his friend, Mike Sheehan, who dresses his wound. VI—Joe leaves Mike's place. He visits Ariel Tabor, who by the death of her uncle Jonas has become rich. She wishes Joe to accompany her and her grandfather to Paris. Joe refuses and leaves Canaan to avoid arrest for the trouble at Judge Pike's. VII—Joe is heard from two years later as a ticket seller for a side show. Eugene Bantry also meets him seven years later in a low resort in New York, but wisely refrains from advertising it. VIII—Joe returns to Canaan a full fledged lawyer. Even his father ignores him, and he is refused accommodations at the National House. IX—Joe is welcomed at the "Beach," and "Happy Fear," one of Joe's admirers, seriously assaults Nashville Corey, a detractor. At the end of Happy's term in prison he visits Joe, who now has a law office on the square, with a living room adjoining. Joe has a large practice, principally among the lower classes, and is frequently attacked by the Tocsin. Joe begins, in his loneliness, to yield to the seduction of the bottle. Bantry's engagement to Mamie Pike is announced. Bantry is now associate editor of the Tocsin, owned by Judge Pike. X—Joe awakens after a "bad night" with the words, "Remember, across the Main-street bridge at noon," ringing in his ears. He goes there and is presently joined by the most beautiful and most beautifully girl he has ever seen. XI—She turns out to be Ariel Tabor, arrived in Canaan the night before from her long sojourn in Paris. She has seen Joe as she alighted from the train and, realizing his condition, had escorted him home after exacting from him a promise to meet her the next day (Sunday) across the Main-street bridge at noon. Joe learns that Ariel is stopping at Judge Pike's home, the judge having entire charge of her money, etc. XII—Eugene Bantry, although engaged to Mamie, is much smitten with Ariel's charms. Judge Pike tries his usual blustering tactics with Ariel, but subsides when she tells him that she shall ask him to turn over the care of her estate to Joe Louden. XIII—Ariel holds a sort of informal reception at Judge Pike's and learns that the "tough element" is taking of running Joe for mayor. XIV Happy Fear and Nashville Cory have more trouble. Joe corners Happy and sends Claudine (Mrs. Fear) to meet him. XV—Ariel visits Joe's affairs in his hands. While there Happy Fear rushes in and announces that he has killed Nashville Cory in self defense. Joe makes Happy give himself up. XVI—Mamie Pike admits to Ariel that she, too has begun to believe in Joe Louden. XVII—The Tocsin makes virulent attacks on Joe Louden and Happy Fear. Mike Sheehan hints that he may shortly have some interesting secrets to divulge in connection with Judge Pike's affairs. XVIII—The Tocsin continues its attacks. Judge Pike informs Ariel that her supposed fortune consists of valueless securities.

CHAPTER XXI.

THERE was meat for gossip aplenty in Canaan that afternoon and evening. There were rumors that ran from kitchen to parlor, and rumors that ran from parlor to kitchen; speculations that detained housewives in talk across front gates, wonderings that held cooks in converse over shadowless back fences in spite of the heat and canards that brought Main street clerks running to the shop doors to stare up and down the sidewalks.

Out of the confusion of report the judicious were able by evenfall to extract a fair history of this day of revolution. There remained no doubt that Joe Louden was in attendance at the deathbed of Eskew Arp, and somehow it came to be known that Colonel Flitcroft, Squire Buckalew and Peter Bradbury had shaken hands with Joe and declared themselves his friends. There were those, particularly among the relatives of the hoary trio, who expressed the opinion that the colonel and his comrades were too old to be

a year ago? Or how it was signed and who made out to? It was Martin Pike that got caught with distillery stock. He speculated once too often!

"No, you're wrong," persisted the colonel. "I tell you I saw it myself."

"Then you're blind," returned his grandson disrespectfully; "you're blind or else—or else!" He paused, open mouthed, a look of wonder struggling its way to expression upon him, gradually conquering every knobby outpost of his countenance. He struck his fat hands together. "Where's Joe Louden?" he asked sharply. "I want to see him. Did you leave him at Miss Tabor's?"

"He's gone to sit up with Eskew. What do you want of him?"

"I should say you better ask that!" Mrs. Flitcroft began shrilly. "It's enough, I guess, for one of this family to go running after him and shakin' hands with him and heaven knows what not! Norbert Flitcroft!"

But Norbert jumped from the porch, ruthlessly crossed his grandmother's geranium bed and, making off at as sharp a pace as his architecture permitted, within ten minutes opened Ariel's gate.

Sam Warden came forward to meet him.

"Don't ring, please, sub," said Sam. "Dey sot me out heah to tell inquirin' friends dat po' ole Mist' Arp mighty low."

"I want to see Mr. Louden," returned Norbert. "I want to see him immediately."

"I don't reckon he kin come out yit," Sam said in a low tone. "But I kin go in an' ast 'im."

He stepped softly within, leaving Norbert waiting, and went to the door of the sickroom. The door was open, the room brightly lighted, as Eskew had commanded when, a little earlier, he awoke.

Joe and Ariel were alone with him, leaning toward him with such white anxiety that the colored man needed no warning to make him remain silent in the hallway. The veteran was speaking, and his voice was very weak, seeming to come from a great distance.

"It's mighty funny, but I feel like I used to when I was a little boy. I reckon I'm kind of scared—after all. Ariel Tabor—are you—here?"

"Yes, Mr. Arp."

"I thought—so—but I—I don't see very well—lately. I—wanted—to—know—to know!"

"Yes—to know?" She knelt close beside him.

"It's kind of—foolish," he whispered.

"I just—wanted to know if you was still here. It—don't seem so lonesome now that I know."

She put her arm lightly about him, and he smiled and was silent for a time; then he struggled to rise upon his elbow, and they lifted him a little.

"It's hard to breathe," gasped the old man. "I'm pretty near—the big road. Joe Louden—"

"Yes?"

"You'd have been—willing—willing to change places with me—just now—when Ariel—"

Joe laid his hand on his, and Eskew smiled again. "I thought so! And, Joe—"

"Yes?"

"You always—always had the—the best of that joke between us. Do you



"It's hard to breathe," gasped the old man.

—you suppose they charge admission—up there?" His eyes were lifted. "Do you suppose you've got to—to show your good deeds to git in?" The answering whisper was almost as faint as the old man's.

"No," panted Eskew, "nobody knows. But I hope—I do hope—they'll have some free seats. It's a—mighty poor show—we'll—all have—if they—don't."

He sighed peacefully, his head grew heavier on Joe's arm, and the young man set his hand gently upon the unseeing eyes. Ariel did not rise from where she knelt, but looked up at him when, a little later, he lifted his hand. "Yes," said Joe, "you can cry now."

CHAPTER XXII.

JOE helped to carry what was mortal of Eskew from Ariel's house to its final abiding place. With him in that task were Buckalew, Bradbury, the colonel and the grandsons of the two latter, and Mrs. Louden drew in her skirts grimly as her stepson passed her in the mournful procession through the hall. Her eyes were red with weeping (not for Eskew), but not so red as those of Mamie Pike, who stood beside her.

On the way to the cemetery Joe and Ariel were together in a carriage with Buckalew and the minister who had read the service, a dark, pleasant eyed young man, and the squire, after being almost overcome during the ceremony, experienced a natural reaction, talking cheerfully throughout the long drive. He recounted many anecdotes of Eskew, chuckling over most of them, though filled with wonder by a coincidence which he and Flitcroft had discovered—the colonel had recently been made the custodian of his old friend's will, and it had been opened the day before the funeral. Eskew had left everything he possessed, with the regret that it was so little, to Joe.

"But the queer thing about it," said the squire, addressing himself to Ariel, "was the date of it, the 17th of June. The colonel and I got to talkin' it over out on his porch last night, tryin' to recollect what was goin' on about then, and we figured it out that it was the Monday after you come back, the very day he got so upset when he saw you goin' up to Louden's law office with your roses."

Joe looked quickly at Ariel. She did not meet his glance, but, turning instead to Ladew, the clergyman, began, with a barely perceptible blush, to talk of something he had said in a sermon two weeks ago. The two fell into a thoughtful and amiable discussion, during which there stole into Joe's heart a strange and unreasonable pain. The young minister had lived in Canaan only a few months, and Joe had never seen him until that morning, but he liked the short, honest talk he had made, liked his cadenceless voice and keen, dark face and, recalling what he had heard Martin Pike vociferating in his brougham one Sunday, perceived that Ladew was the fellow who had "got to go" because his sermons did not please the judge. Yet Ariel remembered for more than a fortnight a passage from one of these sermons. And as Joe looked at the manly and intelligent face opposite him it did not seem strange that she should.

He resolutely turned his eyes to the open window and saw that they had entered the cemetery, were near the green knoll where Eskew was to lie beside a brother who had died long ago. He let the minister help Ariel out, going quickly forward himself with Buckalew, and then, after the little while that the restoration of dust to dust mercifully needs, he returned to the carriage only to get his hat.

Ariel and Ladew and the squire were already seated and waiting. "Aren't you going to ride home with us?" she asked surprised.

"No," he explained, not looking at her. "I have to talk with Norbert Flitcroft. I'm going back with him."

His excuse was the mere truth, his conversation with Norbert in the carriage which they managed to secure to themselves continuing earnestly until Joe spoke to the driver and alighted at a corner near Mr. Farbach's Italian possessions. "Don't forget," he said as he closed the carriage door, "I've got to have both ends of the string in my hands."

"Forget?" Norbert looked at the cupola of the Pike mansion rising above the maples down the street. "It isn't likely I'll forget!"

When Joe entered the "Louis Quinze room" which some decorator, drunk with power, had mingled into the brewer's villa, he found the owner and Mr. Sheehan, with five other men, engaged in a meritorious attempt to tone down the apartment with smoke. Two of the five others were prosperous owners of saloons, two were known to the public (whose notion of what it meant when it used the term was something of the vaguest) as politicians; the fifth was Mr. Farbach's closest friend, one who (Joe had heard) was to be the next chairman of the city committee of the party. They were seated about a table, enveloped in blue clouds and hushed to a grave and pertinent silence which clarified immediately the circumstance that whatever debate had preceded his arrival, it was now settled.

Their greeting of him, however, though exceedingly quiet, indicated a certain expectancy as he accepted the chair which had been left for him at the head of the table. He looked thinner and paler than usual, which is saying a great deal, but presently, finding that the fateful hush which his entrance had broken was immediately resumed, a twinkle came into his eye, one of his eyebrows went up, and a corner of his mouth went down.

"Well, gentlemen?" he said.

The smokers continued to smoke and to do nothing else, the exception being Mr. Sheehan, who, though he spoke not, exhibited tokens of agitation and excitement which he curbed with difficulty, shifting about in his chair, gnawing his cigar, crossing and uncrossing his knees, rubbing and slapping his hands together, clearing his throat with violence, his eyes fixed all the while, as were those of his companions, upon Mr. Farbach. So that Joe was given to perceive that it had been agreed that the brewer should be the spokesman. Mr. Farbach was deliberate, that was all, which added to the effect of what he finally did say.

"Choc," he remarked placidly, "you are der next mayor of Canaan."

"Why do you say that?" asked the young man sharply.

"Bickoss us here," he answered, interlocking the tips of his fingers over his waistcoat, that being as near folding his hands as lay within his power. "Bickoss us here shall try to fix it, and so hef decided."

Joe took a deep breath. "Why do you want me?"

"Dot," replied the brewer, "iss something I shall tell you." He paused to contemplate his cigar. "We want you bickoss you are der best man for der position."

"Louie, you mustn't make a mistake at the beginning," Joe said hurriedly. "I may not be the kind of man you're looking for. If I went in"—He hesitated, stammering. "It seems an ungrateful thing to say, but—but there wouldn't be any slackness—I couldn't be bound to anybody!"

"Holt up your hosses!" Mr. Farbach once in his life was so ready to reply that he was able to interrupt. "Who hef you heest speak off bounding? Heef I speak off favors? Dit I say der should be slackness in der city goferment? Litsen to me, Choc." He renewed his contemplation of his cigar, then proceeded: "I hef been tinkin' it over now a couple years. I hef mate up my mind. If some peobles are gombelt to keep der laws and oders are not, dot's a great atwantitch to der oders. Dot iss what iss ruinin' der goundry, and der peobles iss commencement to take notice. Efer'veres in oder towns der iss housecleanin'. Dey are reformin' and indleed, and poety soon dot mofement comes here—shoo-er! If we intent to holt der party in power, we should be a leetle ahead off dot mofement so when it should be here we hef a goot 'minadstration to fall back on. Now, der iss andoder brewery opened and tryin' to gombelt mit me here in Canaan. If dot brewery owns der mayor, all der tasloons buyin' my beer must shut up at 'leven o'clock and Sundays, but der oders keep open. If I own der mayor, I make der same against dot oder brewery. Now, I am poety sick off dot ways off bitness and fightin' all times. Also," Mr. Farbach added, with magnificent calmness, "my trade iss largely outsid der Canaan, and it iss bedder dot here der laws should be enforced der same for all. Litsen, Choc! All us here beelers der same way. You are square. Der whole tasloon element knows dot and knows dot all vout be treated der same. Mit you it vout be fairness for each one. Foolish peobles hef saif you are a law tricker, but we know dot you hef only mate der laws protect as well as bunish. Und at such times as dey bet been broken you hef made dem as mertsiful as you coult. You are no tricker. We are willing to help you make it a glenn town. Oder-vice der fightin' vout go on until der mofement strikes here and all der granks vake up and we git a fool reformer for mayor and der town goes to der dogs. If I try to put in a man dot I own, der oder brewery iss goin' to fight like h—l, but if I work fer you it will not fight so hart."

"But the other people," Joe objected, "those outside of what is called the saloon element—do you understand how many of them will be against me?"

"It iss der tasloon element," Mr. Farbach returned peacefully, "dot does der fightin'."

"And you have considered my standing with that part of Canaan which considers itself the most respectable section?" He rose to his feet, standing straight and quiet, facing the table, upon which, it chanced, there lay a copy of the Tocsin.

"Und yet," observed Mr. Farbach, with mildness, "we got some poety raskedable men right here."

"Except me," broke in Mr. Sheehan grimly, "you have."

"Have you thought of this?" Joe leaned forward and touched the paper upon the table.

"We hef," replied Mr. Farbach; "all of us. You shall bent it."

There was a strong chorus of confirmation from the others, and Joe's eyes flashed.

"Have you considered," he continued, "while a warm color began to conquer his pallor—'have you considered the powerful influence which will be against me, and more against me now, I should tell you, than ever before—that influence, I mean, which is striving so hard to discredit me that Lynch law has been hinted for poor Fear if I should clear him? Have you thought of that? Have you thought?"

"Have we thought of Martin Pike?" exclaimed Mr. Sheehan, springing to his feet, face aflame and beard bristling. "Aye, we've thought of Martin Pike, and our thinkin' of him is where he begins to git what's comin' to him! What d'ye stand there pickin' straws fer? What's the matter with ye?" he demanded angrily, his violence tenfold increased by the long repression he had put upon himself during the brewer's deliberate utterances. "If Louie Farbach and his crowd says they're fer ye, I guess ye've got a chanst, haven't ye?"

"Walt," said Joe. "I think you underestimate Pike's influence."

"Underestimate the devil!" shouted Mr. Sheehan, uncontrollably excited. "You talk about influence! He's been the worst influence this town's ever had—and his tracks covered up in the dark wherever he set his ugly foot down! These men know it, and you know some but not the worst of it, because none of ye live as deep down in it as I do! Ye want to make a clean town of it, ye want to make a little heaven of the Beach?"

"And in the eyes of Judge Pike?" Joe cut him off, "and of all who take their opinions from him. I represent Beaver Beach!"

Mike Sheehan gave a wild shout. "Whooroo! It's come! I knowed it would! The day I couldn't hold my tongue, though I passed my word I would when the coward showed the deed he didn't dare to git recorded! Waugh!" He shouted again, with his

ter laughter. "Ye do! In the eyes of them as follow Martin Pike ye stand fer the Beach and all its wickedness, do ye? Whooroo! It's come! Ye're an offense in the eyes of Martin Pike and all his kind because ye stand fer the Beach, are ye?"

"You know it!" Joe answered sharply. "If they could wipe the Beach off the map and me with it!"

"Martin Pike would?" shouted Mr. Sheehan, while the others, open mouthed, stared at him. "Martin Pike would?"

"I don't need to tell you that," said Joe.

Mr. Sheehan's big fist rose high over the table and descended crashing upon it. "It's a lie!" he roared. "Martin Pike owns Beaver Beach!"

(Continued from Last Week.)

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